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A

NORTH BRITON

EXTRAORDINARY.

PUBLISHED AT EDINBURGH.

Degeneres animos timor arguit. VIRG.



L O N D O N :

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EXTRAORDINARY

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ADVERTISEMENT

By the EDITOR.

THE following performance, printed at Edinburgh, was transmitted to me here by an Englishman, a friend of mine, in office in that city, and I thought it a piece of justice we owed to our national character, to shew the Scotch, that though we have listened perhaps too much to what has been thrown out against them, we are equally ready to hear whatever may be said against ourselves. With this view I give it to the public, without presuming to anticipate their judgment upon it, and flatter myself it will not be unacceptable.

ADVERTISEMENT

By the EDITOR

THE following performance, printed at Edinburgh, was transmitted to me, by an Englishman, a friend of mine, in office in that city, and I thought it a piece of office we owed to our national character, to lay it before the public, though we have suffered perhaps too much to what has been thrown out against them, we are equally ready to bear whatever may be said against ourselves. With this view I give it to the public, without pretending to anticipate their judgment upon it, and leave to them to say what is thinkable.

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NORTH BRITON

EXTRAORDINARY.

Edinburgh, February 5, 1765.

TO many it has appeared surprizing that the Scotch, never famed for long-suffering nor slow to anger, should of late have borne tamely and unanswered, the greatest torrent of impertinent abuse that ever malice and stupidity poured out against superior merit; but to those who consider how flattering it is to become the object of envy, the wonder will cease, and they will agree, that the silent con-

tempt with which we receive all this scurrility, is also its properest answer——Let then our southern brethren rail at us for the lead we take in war and in commerce, in the arts and in the sciences; their jealousy is the strongest and most sincere acknowledgement of our superiority, and justifies, in some degree, that conscious pride which leads us to draw comparisons between them and ourselves, perhaps too much to their disadvantage. The English in general are unquestionably less instructed than the Scotch, and their principles more debauched, yet there are many among them who, by their learning and virtue, are worthy of our highest esteem and imitation; and even among their nobility, there are some possessed of an elevation of soul, and delicacy of sentiment, that would do honour to our most illustrious Scotch families, who trace their origin beyond the name of the English nation itself. Let us then allow them in particular what we deny them

them in general; and acknowledge the superior merit of an Englishman wherever it exists, while they, by cavilling at every private character from north of Tweed, only serve to fix more indisputably the reputation of the whole. There is, however, one general superiority, of which they are fully sensible, and which no Scotchman is hardy enough to deny. In all humility I confess their riches; but if I may be allowed, like the fox in the fable, to find fault with the grapes I cannot reach, I will assert that the richest part of their nation is the most contemptible, and that their superiority in this, is the true cause of their inferiority in every thing else. Whenever in a nation riches are sought after, as the *summum bonum*, when they supply the place of birth and education, virtue and taste, the morals of that people will soon be corrupted, their manners will degenerate, and they will justly acquire the distinguishing appellation of "*Les Sauvages d'Europe*."

“ *d’Europe.*” How far this is already the case in England, I leave every man to judge from his own observation. This is, however, certain, that riches, even with us where they are so rare, do not bestow the same importance as with them where they are so common. Here an illiterate stock-jobber, who can just set his mark to his quarter’s discharge, would hardly be as much revered as a master of a college, nor a cheese-monger who can buy a borough, as much respected as a peer of the realm. But to leave declaiming against their vices, let us endeavour to trace the proper effects of riches in their taste and manners. We all know with what splendour the Italian states shone while enriched by trade, when princes were their merchants, and their merchants princes. Venice and Florence then became the admiration of the universe for the wisdom of their policy, the grandeur of their public works, and the elegance of their private luxury. In
vain

vain do we look out for the same refinements in London, that has now for more than a century been esteemed the richest city in Europe. In private life we find tasteless riot and indelicate gluttony mistaken for luxury, and instead of wisdom and order in their police, we find the most absurd and ineffectual regulations, filth, danger and inconveniency in every street, the peace of the city trusted with an old feeble and undisciplined watch, and the safety of the public roads with thief-takers and villains. The public buildings speak for themselves. They have been long noted for poorness of design and clumsiness of execution, and if any thing of taste appears among them of late, we may boldly ascribe it to a foreigner, or to a Scotchman. The works of a Gibbs distinguish themselves, and we all know to whom the Londoners owe the elegant design of a work now carrying on, which they, however, have disgraced with an inscription of their own, that the meanest

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school-

schoolmaster in the meanest parish in Scotland, would have been ashamed of. While Blackfriars-bridge shall last, it will be a monument of Scotch architecture, and of English latin. And here by the way it is pleasant enough to observe, that the same people who charge poverty on the Scotch as their greatest crime, and rail at the ministry for bestowing a trifling sum towards building a bridge that rests only one abutment in Scotland, have not been ashamed to receive of the public thousands and ten thousands, for repairing the old crazy and ill-contrived bridge of London; and that at this moment, the poorest peasant in Scotland is actually taxed his proportion, for the great and national objects of * paving the streets

* The parliament has granted for ?
paving the streets — £. 15,000

— And for the fish-scheme 2,500
Further to illustrate this last article, and to set in the truest light the taste and judgment of the English, I shall here give an extract from the accounts of a society instituted at London, professedly for the encouragement of arts, manufactures and commerce. In the year 1762, their funds were applied as follows, viz.

For

streets of that opulent metropolis, in imitation of Edinburgh, and of bringing mac-krels and sprats a halfpenny a pound cheaper to the tables of the wealthy Londoners.

If such be the effects of wealth on the morals, taste and manners of the English, we have no reason to envy them so dangerous a superiority; and yet even this superiority they owe to accident, and not to any extraordinary merit which they may arrogate to themselves; for whoever considers the fatal concurrence of circumstances that checked the progress of industry in Scotland, will rather be surpris'd, that any spark of that spirit should have remained among us.

While the English were improving, in peace, the arts of commerce and agriculture, under

For the polite arts, manufactures, mechanics, chemistry, &c.

} £. 1,594 17 7

For the encouragement of agriculture

} 15 17 4

For the improvement of the colonies,

[comprehending fourteen provinces and twelve islands]

} 20 0 0

For bringing fish by land-carriage to London

} 3000 0 0

a settled administration, we were harassed by the turbulence of five successive minorities; and at last our monarchs, leaving their ancient and natural kingdom, and governing it by English councils, our interests were totally neglected, and we became the starved step-children, while they were the pampered favourites.

At the union, the advantages for England were easily perceived, ours were more remote. Its first and most immediate effect, was to load us with taxes we never knew before, to pay the interest of debts we never contracted. It was then we first knew the blessings of an English excise, and the first South Britons we saw among us were collectors, tide-waiters, gaugers and informers, samples noways calculated to give us a high idea of the stock. We at this time also renounced, in favour of our new brethren, the beneficial trade we carried on with Holland and France, from whence, in return for our

com-

commodities, we were in use to supply ourselves with the manufactures we wanted; much cheaper than we could from them; and we agreed to drink Port in preference to claret, because the English carried on a lucrative trade with Portugal, in which, even to this day, we have not come in for the smallest share. To what a height our consumption of English commodities has increased since that time, may be estimated from the vast importation to Leith alone; and in what light of importance they view this branch of trade, is best shewn by the keanness with which they solicit it, their riders swarming to the most remote corners of Scotland in quest of custom. On the other hand it must be confessed, that the English take off many of our commodities, and that in several branches we have extended our commerce in consequence of the union; but it is evident that all our acquisitions in trade tend to the advantage of England, even considered as a separate state, because

because the more considerable our gains are; the more are we enabled to consume of their manufactures; and in fact we find this consumption to encrease daily, even beyond the increase in our ability to pay: So that nearly the whole produce of our mines, fisheries, manufactures, and foreign commerce, is obliged to be remitted to London, to answer the balance against us. And to add still to the advantages of our neighbours, our nobility and landed gentry spend at least one third of the rents of all Scotland among them. Thus while we scorned to become a province to England, we are in fact become its most valuable colony, and the English owe a considerable part of their riches to the very people whose poverty they affect to despise.

That they owe their liberty also in a great measure to a people, whose principles they have falsely and ignorantly represented as inclined to despotism and slavery, will appear

pear by the history of their own kingdom:
 And if any Englishman will give himself
 the trouble to read what none of his coun-
 try was ever yet found capable to write, he
 will there see that the Scotch knew to de-
 fend their liberties, as well from the usur-
 pations of their own princes, as from the
 attacks of foreign powers. How well we
 did the last, the English annals bear witness,
 when for a course of almost five centuries,
 we withstood the efforts of a too powerful
 neighbour. Even when the ambitious and
 ungenerous Longshanks, taking advantage
 of our civil dissensions, had reduced us to the
 last extremity, all at once the spirit of the
 nation roused itself, parties united, the tyrant
 was driven out of the kingdom, and his son
 sent home in a fishing-boat, which ought to
 be preserved in Westminster-abbey, along
 with the regal chair which the father stole
 from Scoone, as a monument of the end,
 as well as the beginning, of all his ambi-
 tious projects. The English ought also to
 remember,

remember, that at a time when their military fame was at the highest, under their gallant Edwards and Henrys, it was the Scotch who gave the first check to their victorious arms abroad. It was a Buchan and a Douglas that first taught the trembling French to face the terrible English bowmen, and Scotch valour then rescued the liberty of France, as it had formerly maintained that of Scotland, against the unbounded ambition of the Plantagenets.—With what indignation would not these Plantagenets, whose arms shook both France and Scotland, look down upon their degenerate posterity, who lately, when a militia was established in England, to revive the national spirit of defence that was almost extinct, denied to us what they thought necessary for themselves. Thirty thousand Englishmen with arms in their hands, were then not ashamed to express a groundless and pusillanimous apprehension of danger from six thousand Scotch, being put on the same footing:—Sentiments
worthy

worthy only of a people who, in 1745, had trembled with black fear at the approach of three thousand half-armed Scotch ragamuffins, to a city of a million of inhabitants; or who, in 1756, had stretched out their weak and defenceless hands, imploring the Dutch, the Hanoverians, and the puissant Prince of Hesse, to save them from a flat-bottomed French invasion.

That we knew to defend our rights at home, will also appear by the whole tenor of our history, and in particular, the famous letter of the Scotch barons to the Pope in 1320, is an authentic testimony of the principles of our ancestors. They there boldly assert their independency on Rome, and their right of chusing a king for themselves; and this too at a time when their neighbours in England were groaning under both civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. In later times, the reformation furnishes us with a very remarkable contrast on the spirit of the two nations.

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What was brought about in Scotland, and forced on the crown, by a free and enquiring people, was in England imposed on the abject people by the arbitrary will of a lustful and capricious tyrant. If, to enjoy Anna Bullen, Henry must have turned Turk, the English nation would undoubtedly have been mussulman at this day. Soon after this period, when our pedantic James, bred up under the controul of a bold and free nobility at home, succeeded to the throne of the Tudors, and came to govern a people accustomed to the yoke, he was deceived by their fawning speeches, and began to exercise a power, nothing new to them but what he had not abilities to support. It was on that occasion the honest Scot, who beheld with indignation their false and flavish professions, broke out and swore by his faul, "*these cringing fuils would spoil a gude king.*" In the reign of his son, the virtuous but deluded Charles, when he, misled by English and arbitrary councils,

wanted

wanted to extend his prerogative, the Scotch were the first to oppose him. They did not then waste their time in idle parliamentary debate, but rushed into the field, and our first nobility were the foremost in the glorious cause. Even the gallant Montrose, that martyr to loyalty, when put in competition, preferred the duty he owed his country, to the love he bore to his king. It is well known, the efforts made by Scotland at that time not only saved itself, but even England, from the tyranny of a Scotch family, under which the united kingdoms might still have groaned at this day.

It is needless to take notice of any more of their insignificant charges against us, prompted by malice, and supported by ignorance. I hope they do not proceed from the best part of the English nation, whom I love, honour, and esteem; and as for the despicable herd who catch the cry from the Grub-street-hounds of sedition, set on by

the rage of a disappointed faction, or perhaps by the secret intrigues of a foreign enemy, they render themselves compleat objects of our contempt, by an impolitick hatred of brethren, with whom it is their interest cordially to unite, and by a mean jealousy of a people, to whom they are every way superior, except in courage and capacity. It is plain the alarm was first rung upon the approach of a Scotchman to the helm of affairs, and it would seem, his country is the only crime they can lay to his charge. But let not us adopt the narrow spirit of the English: Let my Lord Bute be judged by his actions, and not by the place of his nativity. We had borne, for fifty years before his promotion, our share of all the disgrace abroad, and oppression at home, that were brought on the British nation, by roguish or blundering English ministers, without ever making their country answerable for their crimes. Even when the spirited Mr. Pitt restored the reputation of our arms and councils,

cils, no Scotchman ever with-held his share of applause, because that minister was born south of Tweed; nor afterwards was England charged with his faults, when he engaged us too deeply in continental affairs, contrary to the tenor of all his former professions. Let then my lord Bute be regarded as a Briton, and as such be intitled to no particular share of our love or hatred.

It is strange that this odious and impolitic distinction of country should take place with the ungenerous English, at the very time when it was almost lost with us; when we were become fond of them, imitating them even to their faults, united with them in the same prosperous cause, shedding our blood and acquiring glory out of all proportion to the taxes we pay; that this should be the very time they should chuse to quarrel with us, to bely us, grossly to revile us, and to deny us any share in the administration of affairs. That they quarrel with us and
revile

revile us is of no consequence, but our pretensions to employments we shall never give up, and we trust to our capacity for success; and whenever they begin to think themselves unequally yoked, let them propose a separation.—In the mean time, by imitating their industry, let us endeavour, by degrees, to lessen the only superiority over us they could ever pretend to, while we still preserve all we ever possessed over them. While they, by narrow-minded and impolitic combinations against Scotch pedlars and mechanics, are doing a real injury to themselves, let us profit by their folly, and receive our countrymen back with open arms, and still more, let us encourage their industrious workmen to come and settle among us.

That truly English maxim of employing men in public affairs, not according to their abilities, but in proportion to the taxes they pay, or in other words, in proportion to their money, deserves no serious answer,

They, I own, would have the same advantage over us by this rule, that we should have over them by the other. But I wonder the following objections never occurred, that my lord Bute, even at that rate, might pretend to a great share of the administration of affairs, while the state would be certainly deprived of the patriotick virtues of Mr. Wilkes, who is as poor as if he were a North Briton indeed, and on whom his friend Churchill's Prophecy of Famine is likely to be fulfilled.

A CITIZEN of EDINBURGH.

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